

MIDSTATE AMATEUR

RADIO CLUB

February 1987

# The Spark Gap

Well, fellow members, here it is February, with its rotten weather. (Have you ever climbed a tower in the rain?) At least we hams have something to keep us occupied on these miserable days; it's just too bad the bands aren't in better shape. A little DX or a good ragchew helps lift the spirits. Unfortunately, the latest World Radio-TV Handbook predicts that 1987 will remain the pits for propagation.

If I remember correctly, 1979 was the best recent year for propagation; too bad I wasn't a ham then! If that's the case, and if sunspots run in 11-year cycles, we really ought to be in an upswing now, but apparently it ain't so. A friend of my wife and her husband, both professional astronomers, visited us two summers ago, and I asked them for more sunspots, but they haven't obliged me. Ah, well, one of these years it's got to get better!

DE N9DON--Many thanks to Mike Head WB9ZQE for coming to our January meeting, and for the good words on our third anniversary. It doesn't seem that long since that first meeting at Custer Baker! We're looking forward to the PanAm Games; they should be a really fabulous time, both for the city and us hams.

In case you've noticed the absence of Sandy WA9RDF, it's because he's in Johnson County Hospital getting thumped and prodded and generally checked out. (Probably getting waked up to take his sleeping pill, too!) Hope it's nothing serious, Sandy, and you're up and on the air soon.

EDUCATION--The fourth annual Spring Novice Class will start on Friday, March 6, at University Heights Hospital. Friday night was definitely not my first choice, but it's the only night the hospital could give us for ten weeks. This should be a test of the dedication of this year's Novice prospects! As always, all members of the club are invited to show up at any class, but particularly the first night. I like to show my prospects that hams don't have two heads and three hands, that we're ordinary folks who worked hard for a special privilege. Please try to be there.

A REMINDER--Dues are payable as soon as possible. If you have already paid, please disregard this notice.

ANOTHER REMINDER--Did you pledge to help pay for the new Stationmaster repeater antenna? If so, and you haven't sent Paul your check, please do so promptly. Paul did us a big

favor, and we shouldn't leave him hanging for any part of the cost. Send it direct to him or through the club, but do send it.

FEBRUARY MEETING--will be on the 21st, at the House of Franklin, usual times. Another good program is on tap, so be sure to be there.

SEEING STARS--The Indiana Astronomical Society has asked to use the 146.835 machine over meeting weekend for some sort of photography program. Only licensed amateurs will be on the air, so we expect no problem with them using it. Plans call for only intermittent use from sunset to about midnight on the nights of the 16th and 17th, so if you hear them on, give them room! (For us non-stellar types, my encyclopedia says that the Messier Catalog, mentioned on this week's net, is a list of stars by type started by an 18th-century French astronomer.) Hope they have good clear weather!

HERE IT IS--I promised you a special treat in this issue, and this is it. This was written by Edgar A. Guest in 1934, but it's still very appropriate, I think. It was reprinted in the January 1987 Popular Communications magazine:

#### THE AMATEURS

There's something about them you've got to admire.  
They work for the love of the task, not for hire.  
Every one of them's blessed with the heart of a boy!  
What's a job to a drudge unto them is a joy.  
While we to our regular schedules are keeping,  
The amateurs do without eating or sleeping.

They worry their wives--since so short is a day--  
They don't get to bed when they should, but they stay  
Sending calls on the air, catching calls from afar--  
And I think as I hear them how patient they are!  
How much better we'd work here if only we knew it  
In that amateur spirit of wanting to do it!

Professionals weary sometimes and they shirk.  
Since they're paid to perform they look on it as work.  
They begin with reluctance, they're glad when they're  
through--  
And they measure in money whatever they do.  
But the amateur never begrudges a minute;  
He goes to the job for the joy that is in it.

So here's to the amateurs--brave-hearted throng--  
Though short be their waves, may their lives all be long!  
May the wisdom they gain and the joys which they reap  
Make up for the nights when they go without sleep;  
And may we--in their spirit and deep understanding  
Of work and its joy--keep our amateur standing!